

The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY
THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

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No. 6

THE CHEERFUL LETTER.

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GRACE AND GRATITUDE.

Lord! come too many gifts from thee
For us to mark each gift?
Down streams thy grace too plenteously
Our spirits up to lift?

Thy light would glorify our lot,
Thy love besets our way;
And yet thine ingrates feel thee not,
And yet thy pilgrims stray.

Still sometimes glorious grows the road,
And grateful raptures come;
All close and tender feels our God,
All near appears our home.

Some sweet surprise our souls doth take
Straight to the heavenly throne:
Some sudden blaze of bliss doth make
The Lord's bright presence known;

Or in some mighty woe awhile
Our gracious God appears,
And strangely beams the Eternal Smile
Amidst the mortal tears.

Alas, these visits rare and rude
Unto thy Holy Place!
Our weak wild bursts of gratitude,
Thy calm, clear deeps of grace!

Oh, never shall thy mercy make
Our souls to rest in thine?
Nor mortal gratitude partake
The flow of grace divine?

When shall our grateful raptures rise
Fast as thy grace descends,
And link to endless harmonies
The love that never ends?

— *T. H. Gill.*

A CHEERFUL OLD AGE.

AN AUTUMN LEAF DISCOURSE.

What compensation for failing powers and the being set aside as no longer of use,—probably one of the sorest trials in advancing years to those who have been active and prominent? The first remedy is *not* to fail, at least, to use every power you have as long as you can, keeping your faculties bright with use. An old friend, a retired minister, wrote a sermon weekly during his life, as conscientiously as if expecting to preach it. It was he who read the hard books in the village library, the books for the few everywhere. He kept up with the most advanced thought of the day, and rejoiced "in the sunshine that would be when he could see it no more." His mind was in unimpaired vigor when, on his ninety-second birthday, the light of life flickered gently in the socket and went out.

Lucretia Mott, unable to thread her needle, said to George Combe, "Thee sees I am growing old." "So you may be," he replied. "But, then, the last thing we should do is to admit that, and so give time the vast advantage of our will. We should fight for our powers, I think, as we have to fight for everything best worth holding."

No doubt we all make a great mistake in, as it were, welcoming age, in saying we are old, especially that we are "too old" to do thus and so. We need not affect juvenility, neither need we court old age. Often, if we should analyze this plea of old age, we should find it but a form of indolence to be resisted now as ever. In spite

of Jean Paul, we must beware of rejoicing in our breakfast and taking comfort in our evening bed too soon. We are never too old to do anything we can. An old lady whom I knew took up oil painting after she was seventy, and became quite an artist, whose fruit pieces were admired and sold; while her husband, not to be outdone, at the same time studied medicine, and hung out his sign with all the confidence of youth. Their spirit was certainly commendable.

We should try not only to retain the powers and accomplishments we already possess, but to acquire new ones. One of the keenest delights in life is to develop a new power. I always sympathize with the serene joy diffused over the face of the white-headed old gentleman who spins by me on his bicycle, while I admire his wisdom in not thinking he was "too old" to learn. If we do not wish to be laid on the shelf as useless, we must be of use. The world teems with good causes suffering for help, and we can always do something to aid if we will. To be sympathetic and interested and eager to help the world while we stay in it is one sure recipe for a cheerful, happy old age.

And another is the love of nature. Those who love nature carry within themselves a source of happiness that nothing can dim, that will only increase with advancing years. "The world seems more beautiful to me every year I live," said a friend who was soon to lay down a long life that had known many sorrows. Always will there be radiant sunsets and morning dawns, river meadows and mountain heights, October foliage, wild flowers nodding in forest depths or along pleasant country roadsides, pine woods, spring's tender haze of new leaves, the ocean's wide expanse; and more and more, as the years go on, do we feel something underlying all this beauty and glory, something inexpressible, yet more real than the things we call tangible,—the peace of God, which fills and uplifts our hearts as we stand in his holy places. To those who are "stepping westward" it is hardly imagination which perceives a hint of the glories of the next world in the dear familiar beauty of this.

One desiring a cheerful old age should be sure to have grandchildren,—if not his own, then some one's. Grandchildren are

certainly a wonderful and delightful provision for brightening the end of life. A little girl, laying her rose-leaf of a hand beside her grandmother's, wrinkled with age, said, "Your hand is old, grandmamma; but mine is new." Thanks be to God that into the end of our lives come these little ones, full of eager interest in the world which has become "a tale that is told" to us. Life has a fresh charm as we view it through these bright "new" eyes. "The eternal child dwells in fine natures," said De Quincey. The child's instinct detects the immortal boy lurking under grandpapa's white hairs, and finds in him his best comrade. Grandpapa is old, that is a way grandpapas have; but he has so much leisure, and who so sure as he to appreciate the new cart or kitten or whatever is the child's absorbing interest? It never occurs to the child that grandpapa or grandmamma are not beautiful. They are always charming and delightful to him.

The many friends that have fallen by the way and vanished from our sight,—those loved more dearly than ourselves, without whom our lives must go but maimed and broken to the end,—is there any possibility of cheer as the aged think of these? Yes, if always we cling to the joy of having had these dear ones. What love God showed in giving us all the happy years brightened by their presence! The love which gave could not have taken away wantonly or cruelly, but because it was best for them and for us that they should go first, while we must stay awhile. But the aged can truly say, "Because the way is *short*, I thank thee, O my God!"

Rarely do those "outlive their usefulness" who, not suffering their powers to fail from indolence and luxurious pampering, love more and more the beauty of this beautiful world; who rejoice in all new movements to help man's progress, aiding them so far as possible; who keep the mind bright with high thoughts from good books, the heart warm with the love of little children; who, indeed, cultivate a lively interest in human beings generally; above all, whose souls are filled with that ever-present consciousness of God's love which gives repose for this life and trust for the next. The peace of God that passeth understanding fills their hearts with quiet sunshine to the

last. The dying year wanes to a December close, only to usher in a joyous New Year, full of larger possibilities. The sun sets, but its radiant afterglow hints the glories of the coming dawn. The autumn leaf, bright to the last, falls from the tree, but only because pushed off by the eager new life crowding behind, the bud already formed, ready to expand in the tender warmth of the quick-coming spring-time.—*P. Thorne.*

THE STILL HOUR.

A THANKSGIVING.

For the love, for the love,
I thank thee, Friend divine!
For the gift all gifts above,
Priceless cordial, sweet and fine;
For the love of babe and child,
Pure fountain undefiled,
Stealing out from depths of earth
Into air, a sudden birth.

For the many hearts that beat
Kindred pulses with my own;
A magnetism sweet,
Felt in look and touch and tone;
For the sudden glance of eye
Opening into treasures hid;
For the accents low and shy;
For the tear-drop on the lid;

For the love, for the love,
Fond, faithful, true, and dear;
Descended from above;
Growing richer year by year;
In sharp trial clinging highest;
When most needed, then most sure;
Which seeks my best and highest,
Which rebukes my low and poor.

For that high angelic group
Of my heart and life the crown;
The love ascended up,
Which from better worlds looks down;
Where father, child, and friend
All tones of sweetness blend,
And, whene'er I lift my eyes,
Shower blessings from the skies.

For the noble ones apart,
Each calmly working on;
With a common aim and heart,
By one purpose made at one.
Though no word across the land,
Though no touch of friendly hand,
Utters love, yet they are there,
And the world has grown more fair.

They came to-night,
A comfort and a light;
They came from far away
To me, so sad and dull;
Found me dark, and brought the day;
Found me empty, left me full.
From roamings wide abroad,
I came back, this home to prove;—
To-night I dwelt in God,
For to-night I dwelt in love!

What a world of love is given
To this unworthy heart!
Caught up to that third heaven,
In God's bliss I have my part.
If I seldom thank thee, Father,
For the thousand gifts of time,—
If I strain my thoughts the rather
To the coming hour sublime,—
Yet for this, the sweetest blessing,
With a simple gratitude,
Its holy source confessing,
I bless the Gracious Good.

—*James Freeman Clarke.*

A Thanksgiving.

Father, I am happy. I long to thank thee for my happiness, for thou hast given it to me, O thou great, ineffable God! It is thy world in which I live and rejoice, thy laws of nature and of human love which bring me joy. Thine endless, awful felicity can only consist in pouring down the rain of blessings through all thy worlds forever; and, amidst them all, I, even I, have been given my portion, and have not been forgotten. I thank thee, I bless thee, O gracious, kind, and merciful Lord! Henceforth I will strive to make my life one long sweet psalm of thanksgiving. When trouble and care come back to me, I will remember how the world looks to me to-day. I will strive to be good and merciful and forgiving to thy creatures, even as thou, blessed God in heaven, hast been good and merciful and all-forgiving to me.

Thanksgiving for the Love of Friends.

My Father, I thank thee for the kindness of thy children to me; for their kindness so much greater than I deserve,—I, so often weak and selfish. How blessed has my life been made by their kind words, their loving and tender actions! Sometimes I have toiled long alone, and have grown sad and heavy-hearted; and then, even then, a

child of thine will speak to me a word of love most truly divine, and the whole long day when that word was spoken is perfumed with sweetest odors, and my faith grows firm in love and goodness and all possibilities of nobleness, and I have hope and heart, and a spirit renewed within me.

I thank thee, O dear Lord, that thou breathest such love upon us; that men may so speak and act, and be angels from thee to each other. I know that their love is from thee: they can love because thou art loving.—From "*Alone to the Alone*," compiled by Frances Power Cobbe.

THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL.

[Contributions to this department may be sent to Mrs. J. S. Howe, 26 Chestnut Street, Brookline, Mass.]

THE MOTHER AT HOME (concluded).

John S. C. Abbott, 1833.

... One great obstacle is the want of self-control on the part of parents. How few persons are there who have gained that conquest over self which enables them to meet the various vicissitudes of life with calmness and composure! How few are there who are not, occasionally at least, thrown off their guard, and provoked to the exhibition of excited and irritated feeling! And can a mother expect to govern her child, when she cannot govern herself? Family government must most emphatically begin at home. It must begin in the bosom of the parent. She must learn to control herself, to subdue her own passions. She must set her children an example of meekness and of equanimity, or she must reasonably expect that all her efforts to control their passions will be ineffectual. A child gets irritated and strikes his sister, and the mother gets irritated and whips the child. Now both mother and child have been guilty of precisely the same fault. They have both been angry, and both, in anger, have struck another. And what is the effect of this sinful punishment? It may make the child afraid to strike his sister again. But will it teach that child that he has done wrong? that it is wrong to be angry? Can it have any salutary effect upon his heart? He sees that his mother is irritated, and thus is he taught that it is proper for him to be

angry. He sees that, when his mother is irritated, *she strikes*; and thus is he taught that the same course is proper for him. The direct effect of the punishment is to feed the flame and strengthen the inveteracy of passion. In such a course as this there is no moral instruction and no salutary discipline. And yet a mother who has not conquered self, who cannot restrain the violence of her own passions, will often thus punish. When we see such a mother, with passionate and turbulent children, no second question need be asked why they are not gentle and obedient. And, when we reflect how very seldom it is that we see an individual who may not be occasionally provoked to act from irritation of the moment, we cannot wonder that the family so often presents a scene of uproar and misrule.

This self-control, at all times and under all circumstances, is one of the most important and most difficult things to acquire. Many parents have, from infancy, been unaccustomed to restraint; and they find a very great struggle to be necessary to smother those feelings which will sometimes rise almost involuntarily. But we should ever remember that this must be done, or we cannot be faithful to our children. We must bring our own feelings and our own actions under a system of rigid discipline, or it will be in vain for us to hope to curb the passions and restrain the conduct of those who are looking to us for instruction and example. Many cases will occur which will exceedingly try a mother's patience. Unless naturally blessed with a peculiarly quiet spirit or habituated from early life to habits of self-government, she will find that she has very much to do with her own heart. This point we would most earnestly urge, for it is of fundamental importance. Anger is temporary insanity. Let a mother feel grieved and manifest her grief when her child does wrong. Let her, with calmness and reflection, use the discipline which the case requires. But never let her manifest irritated feeling or give utterance to an angry expression. If her own mind is thus kept serene and unimpassioned, she will instruct by example as well as precept. She will easily know and more judiciously perform her duty, and the superiority of her own conduct will command the respect and admiration of her children. And, until this

is done, it will be impossible for a mother to enforce the rules of discipline, simple and obvious as those rules are.

NATURAL HISTORY.

NOVEMBER BOTANY.

At the Arboretum.

There is certainly something appealing in a solitary flower appearing amid the leafless desolation of November with all the sweetness of June in its fragrance. Not that procrastination is to be commended if the flower should have blossomed five months before, nor that a precipitate rushing into bloom seven months too early is a desirable trait, but simply that the flower has made a mistake, and it seems a distinctly pathetic object on a cold November morning.

I had been looking at the changes autumn had made in the shrubs planted at the Forest Hills entrance of the Arboretum, attracted first by the more conspicuous shrubs,—the blood-red leaves of the flowering cornels, those of the Japanese barberries, green touched by flame, and the golden-yellow foliage of the sweet pepper-bushes. Then, turning to an arrow-wood viburnum with the foliage as fresh and green as it is in midsummer, I discovered a flat white flower cluster, perfectly developed and smelling as sweet as it does in spring. I confess that the flowers of the arrow-wood have never particularly attracted me; but not to have taken pleasure in this one would have been like ignoring an old though perhaps unloved acquaintance in the ice-fields of central Greenland. It would have shown a gross lack of appreciation.

Thinking that where there was one flower out of season there might be another, I went to the collection of shrubs to see if I could find any more where it was sheltered and warm. The scarlet urn-shaped hips of the roses were there; the red berry-like fruit and rich leaves of the chokeberry growing beside the dull black fruit of a related species, the privet and buckthorn, with leaves unturned; the tamarix, with sprays of delicate green shot through with yellow, the colors blending like the lights in an

electric fountain. There were the brilliant red stems of the red osiers outerimsoning their leaves; the black alders, bare of leaf, but burdened with berries, varying from rich red to pale yellow; and foreign shrubs with leaves unturned and others blazing scarlet. But I passed them all in my unseasonable search for flowers. My attention was attracted to a fine specimen of *Euonymus europæus*, the European spindle-tree, its square stems glowing with red leaves, and arils of bright orange hanging below the rosy capsules of the fruit. This little tree is common through the middle and northern countries of Europe, and sixty or seventy years ago it had a reputation for furnishing the best wood for making spindles, while old women extracted a hair dye from the fruit capsules. Now these glories have passed, and its usefulness lies in supplying British butchers and cooks with wooden skewers. However, an ornamental shrub has little demand made upon its commercial qualities in these days of the higher landscape gardening, so I admired its beauty; and, pushing aside a branch, I saw three little greenish-white flowers coming, as the arrow-wood's probably had come, six months too soon, brought out by the warmth of the early November days.

The foliage of a low-growing Japanese spindle-tree, growing near, was a bright, shining green; and far in underneath these evergreen leaves I saw the remains of a deserted hornet's nest. The branch to which it was fastened almost touched the ground, and it had evidently been given up in the process of construction as an unfavorable situation for a permanent dwelling. There seems to be little discretion among hornet-builders. They chose an empty basket in the attic of our house last summer as a place for a nest, and were speedily sulphured out, to their great consternation. A bee would have known by instinct this inevitable result.

I found several specimens of spiræa with flowers. *Spiræa prunifolia* from Japan was well covered with small pure white blossoms; and *Spiræa thunbergii*, another Japanese spiræa, which blooms, as the other does, early in the spring, had a number of white flowers among its slender, drooping branches.

A specimen of candytuft (*Iberis tenoreana*)

was densely covered with a mass of small white flowers, and made a striking contrast to the row of grape-vines just behind it, their leaves dead and partly fallen, and the grapes hanging in dried, wizened clusters.

Two honeysuckles were in bloom. *Lonicera heckrottii* was thickly covered with red blossoms, and in the midst of the trailing vines of *Lonicera halliana* I found a few yellow flowers.

Among the evergreen shrubs the heath (*Erica tetralix*) had one or two rose-colored flowers still blooming, and there were some deep rose flowers on the heather (*Calluna vulgaris*) and several purple flowers on the dabœciâ (*Dabœcia polifolia*). These heaths are all hardy; and, as they sometimes bloom in Great Britain as late as September, it is not remarkable that they should still have a few remaining flowers in November. *Lycium chinense*, the Chinese matrimony vine, was covered with magenta blossoms pushing out among its scarlet fruit,—a combination of color strongly suggesting Chinese taste in such matters, judging from certain gaudy specimens of their embroidery hidden away in camphor chests brought home from China long ago.

The delicate pink flowers of *Abelia rupestris*, the yellow cruciferous flowers of the little wild mustard, and the light yellow and orange flowers of butter-and-eggs which I found growing in the grass, together with the ragged yellow ones of the witch-hazel blossoming properly at their appointed time, made a list of fifteen different flowers found that Sunday morning.

I left the shrubs, and started for the top of the hill. Passing under a shagbark hickory near the road, I noticed that many of its leaf stalks had been left behind, and were sticking out conspicuously over the tree. It seemed as if the leaflets had fallen hurriedly before the plane of cells at the base of the leaf stalk could complete its growth and sever the whole leaf from the stem.

The elms were bare, and so was the large red maple growing near the road; and its pink buds made the tips of its curving branches a dull red against the gray background of sky.

Turning round to look back at the top of the hill, it was interesting to see the general effect of misty reddish-brown the

changing trees had given to the landscape. The groundwork was still green, and on the hill at the right, where some pines and firs made a dark contrast to the light green grass at their feet, there was no suggestion of coming winter; but at the left, where a little wood of oaks dulled a hill to uniform brown, unrelieved by sunshine through the mist, the landscape had every appearance of November. Between the hills the shrubs, in hazy outlines, suggested browns and yellows and dull greens with an occasional streak of scarlet. For the most part the roads were untravelled. There were a few bicycles and vehicles, but the stream of summer carriages was over. It was so quiet I could hear the church-bells ringing in Jamaica Plain, and once there was the incongruous interruption of a donkey's bray. The leaves had fallen from the sassafras, and, as I passed, I noticed the strong, aromatic fragrance so peculiarly its own. I had never smelt this in winter unless I deliberately bruised the branches, and I imagine that this odor may have exuded from the fresh leaf scars before the cold weather stilled the flow of sap in the trees. A little hop hornbeam in the woods was bare of leaf; but its dainty tracery of twig and catkin and the delicate intersection of its branches made its outlines more pleasing than it is in summer, when the leaves hide its graceful beauty.

The large pignut on the hill was bare; and, like the shagbark, it was covered with leaf-stalks. The characteristics of every tree are carried out in detail; and it was interesting to see that the leaf stalks on the pignut were finer than those of the shagbark, just as its leaves, bark, branches, its twigs, nuts, and buds are finer.

The birches on the side of the hill were divided in their progress of defoliation. The black and yellow birches, with their many points of resemblance, were alike in having shed their foliage, and so had the little gray birch; but the white and red birches were still covered with golden leaves. Two blue jays were busy in one of the red birches pecking the trunk and pulling off strips of its loose, flaking bark. A small Oriental plane-tree on the right was in full leaf, making a dense foliage of uniform green,—a striking instance of nature's inconsistency in the autumn.

I left the road then, and made my way through the bushes to the place where the walnuts are planted. Both the butternuts and black walnuts had lost their leaves, and, unlike the hickories, their leaf-stalks had fallen with the leaves and their scarred stems were free.

The oaks are planted just beyond the walnuts, and here I found colors varying from dull brown to scarlet in the foliage of the different species of oak. The mossy cup oak had turned brown, and its leaves were lined with a delicate fawn color,—a pleasing contrast to the darker brown on the upper sides. Under the trees had fallen the peculiar deep-cupped, mossy-fringed acorns which give this oak its name. The leaves of the post oak always rough to the touch, seemed even rougher now that they had turned brown and there was no lighter shade beneath to relieve their uniform dullness. The swamp white oaks were brown, and so were the chestnut oaks; but the white oaks had turned a beautiful rich red, and were the glory of their family. Among the black oaks the red, black, and pin oaks had all turned alike, their leaves being a mixture of green, brown, and yellow; while the scarlet oak stood alone in this family, as the white oak in the other, for its brilliant foliage of shining crimson.

There is a large white oak standing alone by the road near the lower gates where I came out of the woods, and, knowing how deceptive the size of a trunk can be, I measured it around the base, and found that it was fourteen feet,—just half the circumference of the largest Waverley Oak in Belmont at the same height above the ground; and yet from a distance it looked as if one might have stretched one's arms around it. The little sugar maple growing by the gates was bare; and, though it had no flower out of season to set one thinking, it held a mystery under its bark as puzzling as any in nature,—the mystery of bird's-eye maple. What makes this wood, how is it done, when is it done, and why should a few sugar maples have it, and not all of them? Of course, something must arrest the flow of the sap and divert the grain of the wood to make the bird's eyes; but what is it? There may be truth in the woodpecker theory; but why should some trees be pecked all over, while others are left untouched? Surely, a woodpecker in quest

of the sweet sap would choose all sugar maples indiscriminately.

I thought that in Vermont, where this maple abounds, I might gain some new theories about this singular wood. I asked a man skilled in the knowledge of woodcraft, whose forests cover three mountains, if he could tell me what makes bird's-eye maple, and he could give no answer. I went to wood-cutters and farmers and the owners of mills, but none of them knew. "It's a freak of nature," they said. "You can't say what makes it." And then one day I asked an old lumberman, who was sitting on his doorstep, smoking his pipe, if he could tell me how it was done. "Tell you? I suppose I can," he said, "but like as not it mightn't suit. It ain't no bird done that,—no, nor squirrel, neither. The Lord done that, but I ain't never heard just how." And with this inadequate information I let the subject drop.—*A. O. Huntington, in Boston Transcript.*

THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB.

[Send all offers and requests for this department to Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 2 Kensington Park, Roxbury, Mass.]

OFFERS.

Will any mother who would like to have "Gentle Measures in training the Young," by Jacob Abbott, or any one who would like "Black Beauty," address Miss Langmaid, 71 Newbury Street, Boston, Mass.?

The following books are offered by the Women's Alliance, Second Church, Salem. Address Miss Decker, 4 Mt. Vernon Street, Salem, Mass.

With first request please send a reference.

"Life of the Saviour," Henry Ware, Jr.; Brazer's "Sermons"; "Looking Upward: Daily Devotions"; "Speller," Swinton; "Speller," Jacobs and Piper; "Language Lessons," Swinton; "Arithmetic," Franklin; "Arithmetic," Hagers; "Virgil," with English Notes; "Ovid," with vocabulary; "Introduction to Latin Composition," Harkness; "First Lessons in Greek," White; "Sunday Lessons for Young Children"; "Sunday School Song Books"; "The Oedipus Tyrannus of Sophocles," Greek with English translation.

The Jamaica Plain branch have added

about fifty books to their loan library. Any one wishing to receive a catalogue please address Miss Gill, Pond Street, Jamaica Plain, Mass.

Miss Cora H. Clarke, 91 Mt. Vernon Street, Boston, Mass., offers "Masterman Ready" (a book on the same plan as the "Swiss Family Robinson"); "Ivanhoe"; "Villette" and "Jane Eyre," Charlotte Brontë; "A Hardy Norseman" and "We Two," Edna Lyall; "The House of Seven Gables," Hawthorne.

For children: "A Wonder-book," "Tanglewood Tales," "Grandfather's Chair," Hawthorne.

REQUESTS.

[Read directions at beginning of Book Club before writing.]

Those who send offers and requests for the Book Club will do us a kindness by noting the following suggestions: 1. Please write very clearly. 2. Do not use a pencil. 3. Do not use contractions, especially names of States (as Cal. and Col. for California, Colorado). 4. Write on one side only of the paper. 5. Do not forget to give your full address. (The State is now and then omitted.) 6. Do not send matter for the Book Club to Miss Clarke, but to Mrs. Nichols, the Book Club secretary.

Those who write to us for the first time must send the name and address of a minister as a reference. Without that the request will not be printed.

I would like to thank all who have been so kind, in the past winter and spring, for reading sent. The time is so long to me. I am in bed yet all the time. I hope some kind friend will remember me with some good reading soon, as I have not had any lately. I would be so glad to get a red-letter Bible, large print, and a photograph album or a book of poems. Mrs. Claudia Akers, Tolar, Texas.

I am once more making Lenoir my home. I shall be here teaching and attending school perhaps a year. The teachers' normal school which I have been attending the past two months has just closed. The standard of education has been raised in this county. Only twelve out of fifty-four teachers received first-grade certificates. I am one of the twelve, and shall begin a

grammar school near this place (Lenoir) September 1. I want to organize a reading club in my school. Please remember me to the kind sisters of the C. L. E. "Book Club." I do not ask reading matter so much for myself, but for many sweet, good boys and girls I know, who are growing up in ignorance. I ask only for myself some educational journal or papers. J. Horton Isbell, Lenoir, Caldwell County, North Carolina.

I am a public-school teacher in a very isolated locality, and have ever been longing for some of the works of the poets and other standard works of fiction. If any of the Cheerful Letter friends will send me reading, I will faithfully share it with others. I am in a position to do much good at this time. I would especially ask for Longfellow's and Tennyson's poems, and also any standard works of fiction or any other reading matter will be gratefully received. Will not some of the Cheerful Letter friends correspond with me? Miss Nannie Coleman, Allwood, Virginia.

Miss Elma Horton, Elkville, North Carolina, would like a teacher's Bible with large print.

By chance yesterday I saw a copy of *The Cheerful Letter*, and enjoyed reading it so much. I would be glad of any magazine or other literature you may send me. I have two little boys. My husband is a minister, and does slum work in different towns. I refer you to Rev. H. C. Byrum of this place. Mrs. W. F. Galloway, New London, North Carolina

Won't you please send "The Lamp-lighter," "Black Beauty," and a few magazines? Ollie George, Cedar Hill, North Carolina.

As it has been some time since I have written, I will now thank the kind friends who sent the books, "The Recollections of Mrs. Somerville" and "The Listener." Both of them were appreciated very much. I am a farmer's wife with three little boys,—the oldest four years, second one twenty months, the baby seven weeks. So, mothers, you know I have my hands full, with nursing and doing my housework. I would still be glad to get some light reading matter, magazines, books, or papers. Mrs. D. E.

Howse, Jackson County, Glenzaida, Alabama.

Mrs. Ida Traywick, Charlotte, North Carolina, a cripple with two children, a boy of thirteen and a girl of ten years, would be glad of suitable reading.

Mrs. H. B. Holloway, Hugh, Charlotte County, Virginia, would be glad to receive any good historical novel and *Munsey's Magazine*, *Outlook*, or *Ladies' Home Journal*. She is teacher of a Sunday-school of poor children in a schoolroom, and would like to get up a small library there for the school. Any book contributed to it will be very gratefully received. Would like the *Youth's Companion* also. Any little picture book would be acceptable, as some of the scholars are very small.

I shall be very thankful for any reading you can send me. I am a farmer's wife, and unable to buy. Mrs. N. P. Liles, Wadesboro, North Carolina.

Mrs. W. L. Mills, Spencer, Virginia, R. F. D. No. 1, asks for a second, third, and fifth reader and spelling books. Mrs. Mills has nine children.

The address of Ella Kerr Kester has changed from Olympia, Washington, to Eugene, Oregon. She, being a lover of good literature and among strangers, would be grateful for any reading.

Rev. C. J. Black, Big Lick, North Carolina, would like to receive a few copies of the *Literary Digest*.

Mrs. Ella F. Griggs, Kola, Virginia, will gladly distribute magazines and other reading.

Mrs. R. B. Price, Stoneville, North Carolina, asks for the *Ladies' Home Journal*.

This has been a year of suffering, and I could not enjoy reading even as much as usual; but the only pleasure mostly was through *The Cheerful Letter*, and I thank all who have kindly remembered me, and only regret that I could not do so by writing them as usual. I shall be very grateful if some one will please send me April, 1902 *Cheerful Letter*, Jan. 28, 1899, *Saturday Evening Post*, July, 1899, *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, and novels by the Brontës except "Jane Eyre" and "Agnes Gray." Any of

R. N. Carey's and any other reading you can send will be very acceptable. Miss Kate A. Wirick.

We have been receiving *The Cheerful Letter* the past six months, and would miss it so much if it were to stop; but our subscription has expired, and we cannot renew it just now. Must it stop? Our address has been changed from Bowen to Wisdom, Montana. I had a correspondent from Waltham, Mass., about one month; and then her husband died, and in two weeks after she was taken. I enjoyed her letters so much, and what reading she sent. It was such a help to me out here. For weeks at a time I never see a woman. We live so far in the mountains. I received several books and magazines after my request was in the paper, but none for the past two or three months; but now, as winter will be with us soon, and they are so long, could I have a little more? I hate to ask, as there are so many requests from the South; but, if there is none for me, I would so like some for the children. They have always wanted one of Louisa M. Alcott's books; but, by the time we get the necessities, we have nothing to get much reading with. When I can, I will send you for the paper. Mrs. George N. Lawrence, Wisdom, Montana.

Mrs. Julia Kelly, Lilesville, Anson County, North Carolina, asks for Holmes's Second and Third Reader, a Primer and song book.

Belle L. Allen, Athens, Texas, would be glad to receive any work on political economy and "Lives of Illustrious Men."

AMUSEMENT COLUMN.

[Contributions to this column may be sent to Miss K. C. Porter, 22 Brimmer Street, Boston, Mass.]

I.

Anagrams.

1. No more stars.
2. There we sat.
3. Best in prayer.
4. Flit on, cheering angel.

II.

Transpositions.

Though small I am, yet, when entire,
I've force to set a house on fire.
Take off one letter, and 'tis clear

I can contain whole herds of deer.
Dismiss another, and you'll find
I once contained all human kind.

III.

Positives and Comparatives.

1. Pork and a carpenter's tool.
2. An arithmetical process and a snake.
3. Part of a ship and the captain.
4. To place and a kind of dog.

IV.

Geographical Questions.

1. What country does everybody eat at Thanksgiving?
2. What city do you often find in a bottle?
3. What island do ladies sometimes wear?
4. What city is burned nightly?
5. What city do we find on the toilet table?
6. What city is worn on the head in summer?
7. What cape names a fur?
8. What river names a long coat?
9. What city in the Northern part of the United States names a statesman?
10. What city in Asia might crow?
11. What mountains are named after a giant?
12. What coast is a troublesome insect?

(St. Nicholas.)

V.

Charade.

My first, a happy youngster,
Went forth one summer's day.
My second he was seeking,
For he was fond of play.
And quoth he somewhat sagely, "I've not a single sou
To buy my whole. So, really, I'll have to make these do."
He found the magic number,
Then down the road he went
To join his merry playmates
On game of whole intent.

Answers to Puzzles in October Number.

I.

- | | |
|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Coat. | 4. Could. |
| 2. Scout. | 5. Hose. |
| 3. Wags. | 6. Stave. |

II.

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| 1. Boston. | 4. Barnstable. |
| 2. Concord. | 5. Brookline. |
| 3. Springfield. | 6. Hyde Park. |

III.

Flag.

IV.

1881.

The address of Lizzie M. Bailey is changed from Monroe Centre, Maine, to Brooks, Maine, R. F. D. 1.

Will the lady who wrote an anonymous letter to the editor (from Florida) kindly send her full name and address? No communications can receive attention unless the signature of the writer is attached. This is not our rule peculiarly. It is the universal rule of all editors, the rule *without exception*. The name is not always printed; but it must be given to the editor.

The editor calls the attention of those who offer books or who ask for them to the point that, our object being to do as much good as possible, we keep the standard of the literature sent by us somewhat high: educational books, religious works, standard novels of a wholesome character are always in order. Harmless light literature may be sent directly to invalids or to places where there is a dearth of innocent amusement; but fiction of an unwholesome tendency is by this rule excluded.

Please note the change of address in writing to our Treasurer. For the winter, her address is 53 Linden Street, Brookline, Mass.

The following request came too late for insertion in the October number:—

Miss Beulah Iles, Tolar, Texas, asks for simple pieces of music (for the piano?) and for songs, especially, "My Heart's To-night in Texas" and "Just a Girl like Mother."

HABITS OF READING.

All young people read a good deal now, but I do not see that a great deal comes of it. They think they have to read a good many newspapers and a good many magazines. These are entertaining, they are very entertaining; but it is not always certain that the reader gets from them just what he reads.

On the other hand, it is certain that people

who only read the current newspapers and magazines get very little good from each other's society, because they are all fed with just the same intellectual food. You hear them repeat to each other the things they have all read in the *Daily Trumpet* or the *Saturday Woodpecker*.

I see no objection, however, to light reading, desultory reading, the reading of newspapers, or the reading of fiction, if you take enough ballast with it, so that the light kites, as the sailors call them, may not carry your ship over in some sudden gale.

The principle of sound habits of reading, if reduced to a precise rule, comes out thus: that for each hour of light reading—of what we read for amusement—we ought to take another hour of reading for instruction or improvement. Nor have I any objection to stating the same rule backward, for that is a poor rule that will not work both ways. It is, I think, true that, for every hour we give to grave reading, it is well to give a corresponding hour to what is light and amusing.

Now a great deal more is possible under this rule than you boys and girls think at first. Some of the best students in the world, who have advanced its affairs farthest in their particular lines, have not in practice studied more than two hours a day. Walter Scott, except when he was goaded to death, did not work more. Dr. Bowditch translated the great "*Mécanique Céleste*" in less than two hours' daily labor; but then, it was regular as the movement of the planets it described. It did not stop, for whim or by accident, more than Jupiter stops in his orbit because a holiday comes round.

"But what in the world do you suppose Mr. Hale means by 'grave reading' or improving reading? Does he mean only the stupid books that 'no gentleman's library should be without'? I suppose somebody reads them at some time, or they would not be printed; but I am sure I do not know when, or how, or where to begin." This is what Theodora says to Florence, when they have read thus far.

Let us see. In the first place, you are not all of you to attempt everything. Do one thing well, and read one subject well: that is much better than reading ten subjects shabbily and carelessly. What is your sub-

ject? It is not hard to find that out. Here you are, living perhaps on the very road on which the English troops marched to Lexington and Concord. In one of the beams of the barn, there is a hole made by a musket-ball, which was fired as they retreated.

How much do you know of that march of theirs? How much have you read of the accounts that were written of it the next day? Have you ever read Bancroft's account of it? or Botta's? or Frothingham's?

There is a large book which you can get at without much difficulty, called the "*American Archives*." The Congress of this country ordered its preparation, at immense expense, that you, and people like you, might be able to study in detail the early history in the original documents, which are reprinted there. In that book you will find the original accounts of the battle as they were published in the next issues of the Massachusetts newspapers. You will find the official reports written home by English officers. You will find the accounts published by order of the Provincial Congress. When you have read these, you begin to know something about the battle of Lexington.

Then there are such books as "*Gen. Heath's Memoirs*," written by people who were in the battle, giving their account of what passed and how it was done. If you really want to know about a piece of history which transpired in part under the windows of your house, you will find you very soon bring together the improving and very agreeable solid reading which my rule demands.

Perhaps you do not live by the road that leads to Lexington. Everybody does not. Still you live somewhere, and you live next to something. As Dr. Thaddeus Harris said to me (Yes, Harry, the same who made your insect book), "If you have nothing else to study, you can study the mosses and lichens hanging on the logs on the woodpile in the woodhouse." Try that winter botany. Observe for yourself, and bring together the books that will teach you the laws of growth of those wonderful plants. At the end of a winter of such careful study, I believe you could have more knowledge of God's work in that realm of nature than any man in America now has,—if I except, perhaps, some five or six of the most distinguished naturalists.—*Edward Everett Hale*.

(To be continued.)

THE CHEERFUL LETTER
EXCHANGE.

OBJECTS.

1. To cheer and comfort the lonely and discouraged—not only invalids, but all who need cheer and comfort—by the interchange of letters and by gifts of books and periodicals.

2. To supply in some measure to young people in remote places the lack of schools, by gifts of school-books, letters, and, for those who desire it, correspondence classes on history, the natural sciences, and other interesting branches of study. If any desire to join such classes, they may send their names to our secretary.

3. Also to supply, to some extent, the lack of a church. One good sermon or sermon extract is printed in each number of the paper. These sermons are never doctrinal, but practical, and intended to cheer and comfort the sorrowful and aid in giving a vital religion without regard to sect or creed.

4. An important part of our mission is to mothers of young families, who feel the importance of their sacred charge and are anxious to learn all that can be known to make of their children good, upright, useful men and women,—good citizens of the country,—for which we must all work together if we would make it fulfil its mission among the nations of the world and to the races of mankind. We give books on subjects connected with the training of children, and our columns are open (in our "Mothers' Council") to all who have questions to ask or interesting suggestions to make on topics important to mothers.

TRAVELLING LIBRARIES.

The Travelling Libraries have now become an important part of Cheerful Letter work. In order that this department may be thoroughly organized and systematized, Miss Louise Brown, Box 91, South Framingham, Mass., has kindly consented to take it in charge. Will those interested in these libraries, and desiring information, kindly address Miss Brown as above?

Send requests for books and letters of thanks to the Book Club Secretary.

IMPORTANT NOTICES.

There will be a meeting of the Cheerful Letter Exchange on Friday, November 7, at 25 Beacon Street, at 10.30 A.M. All persons interested are cordially invited.

Please notice the change of address of our secretary, Miss Langmaid, to 71 Newbury Street, Boston, Mass. All who desire correspondents are reminded to write directly to Miss Langmaid.

THE ATTENTION OF ALL READERS OF "THE CHEERFUL LETTER" IS CALLED TO THE FOLLOWING NOTICE:—

It is contrary to the rules of the Cheerful Letter Exchange to allow any one to make use of our paper by addressing letters, asking for money, clothing, or other articles, to those whose names are printed in the paper. This prohibition includes requests to borrow money and the offering of articles for sale. The name of any person who infringes this rule will be dropped from our list; and any one who receives a request of this description is desired by our Executive Committee to return no answer, but to enclose the letter at once to our secretary, Miss Langmaid.

DIRECTIONS.

EDITOR,—Miss L. Freeman Clarke, 91 Mt. Vernon Street, Boston, Mass.

SECRETARY OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Miss Bertha Langmaid, 71 Newbury Street, Boston, Mass.

SECRETARY OF BOOK CLUB OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 2 Kensington Park, Roxbury, Mass.

TREASURER OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Miss Louise Howe, 53 Linden St., Brookline, Mass., or 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

Subscriptions and renewals should be sent to the treasurer, also all changes of address and requests for discontinuance. The subscription is fifty cents a year. If subscribers do not receive the paper regularly, they are requested to notify Miss Howe at once.

Those not able to subscribe for the paper, but desiring to receive it, may do so by writing to Miss Louise Howe, as above. Please give full name and address. Also send name of minister as reference. Some of our members take the paper in order to send it to those who are not able to subscribe for it.